

## Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership Success Story



Fairview Middle School  
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### Fairview Middle School RECYCLING TEAM

#### The Member

The Fairview Middle School **Recycling Team** was formed in 1999 to raise environmental awareness at the school, involve special-needs students in an ongoing service project, and develop self-esteem and important vocational skills in these students.

#### The Story

The team initially collected over 50 cardboard boxes and covered them with green butcher paper. Their original logo (a smiley-face pine tree) was affixed to the boxes and distributed school-wide.

At first, the **Recycling Team** efforts barely filled one 150-gallon container every two weeks with office and classroom paper. As the effort grew, the **Recycling Team** was eventually able to fill seven 150-gallon containers every two weeks.

Through a lot of hard work and determination, the students developed an effective routine of handling paper weekly for over 600 students.

In 2000, with funds generated from the first year's efforts, we purchased durable recycling bins for over 50 classrooms and offices. The team attached their smiley-face "Recycle" logo to each new bin, proving that their hard work had paid off.

The **Recycling Team** chose to use funds for other projects around the school. It purchased concrete benches, trees, flowers and bulbs for the school grounds. This year, the team has earmarked over \$2000 to go toward an outdoor classroom.

In 2000, the **Recycling Team** collected over 800 books in the Williamson County Phone Book Recycling Campaign. In 2001 and 2002, we were the winning middle school in Williamson County with over 4,000 books and then 5,300 books collected during those campaigns.

In February 2003, the goal was to help the **Recycling Team** place first among all schools in Williamson County. The team tirelessly unloaded, counted, and stacked thousands of books, astonishing everyone with a final count of 9,388 and reaching the goal of first place among all county schools.

#### The Success

In just four short years, all of Fairview Middle School has gotten behind the efforts of the **Recycling Team**. The special-needs members of the team have developed a strong work ethic and vocational skills, and a sense of pride in making a contribution to their community. This year the team is comprised of four severely disabled girls (two with multiple handicaps), who are now recognized for their contributions and dedication, not merely for their differences.

In addition to the awards won through phone book recycling, the Fairview mayor honored the **Recycling Team** in 2000 for its commitment to the environment. The TDEC bestowed K-12 Environmental Awareness Awards on the **Recycling Team** four years in a row.



#### The Pollution Prevented

Since 1999, Fairview Middle School collected over 21,000 phone books (including 1,901 books collected in 2004), diverting them from landfills.

Out of 38 schools in the county, Fairview Middle is the top paper recycling school per capita. From September 2002-December 2003, more than 28,000 pounds of paper were recycled. When this weight was compared to that of 3 ½ male Indian elephants (each averaging 8000 pounds), the **Recycling Team** members were able to visualize the impact of their efforts.

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